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HODGSON'S "METAPHYSICS OF EXPERIENCE" AS THE FOUNDATION OF THEOLOGY.¹

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THE conception of God is of vital importance to theology. Do we know God? What is the source of our knowledge? Is this source reason, or revelation, or both, forming together a unity of truth concerning God, man, and their relations? Our reply to these questions determines the character of our theology. There are four positions that may be taken. One despairs of knowing anything of this Supreme Being; another is overconfident, knowing even the secrets of Infinity, and is assured of the divine attributes in their variety and their relations; a middle course maintains that our knowledge is in so far correspondent with Reality, and consequently the truth, but at the same time it is granted that Reality is far more than we know; finally, there is that view which essentially follows Kant in his distinction between theoretical and practical reason, limiting knowledge to the theoretical. This negative theology has always been a feature of neo-Platonic thought, whether of the Alexandrian school or of St. Augustine who attempted to synthesize it with the Christian conception of the Absolute as a personal Will; Anselm did likewise, and Calvin is not so far removed from St. Augustine that we can recognize no resemblance between them. Kant attempted to fix for all time what can and what cannot be known of God. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* affirmed that knowledge was limited to sense-phenomena when *thought* by the Understanding, however much we might *think* of that which lies beyond the realm of sense and desire to know its existence and nature. Such a theory of knowledge becomes metaphysical in affirming that there is no knowledge of God possible, and reduces theology to the task of formulating the practical and constructing a systematic view of the content of faith with only a vague assurance of the trustworthiness of this view which cannot be regarded as knowledge.

Mr. Hodgson in the closing sections of his *Metaphysics of Experience* discusses "The Foundation of Theology," practically adapting, with some modifications, the Kantian theory just presented, showing that the foundation of theology is philosophical and, indeed, that the only tenable founda-

¹*The Metaphysics of Experience*. By SHADWORTH H. HODGSON. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1898. Vol. I, xv + 459 pages; Vol. II, 403 pages; Vol. III, 446 pages; Vol. IV, 503 pages.

tion for theology is that offered by *The Metaphysics of Experience*; while theology is limited to the systematization of the practical and is not to be regarded ultimately as knowledge, since it is only the conceptual representation of the content of faith. It is the purpose of this paper to develop somewhat in detail Mr. Hodgson's argument, partly because it forces to the front the question whether theology can claim to be knowledge of the Supreme Reality, or whether theology is only a pleasing mental exercise of little ultimate significance; partly because it calls special attention to the conception of God; and partly because there are many suggestions in this work of much importance to the theologian.

Let me at the outset acknowledge that *The Metaphysics of Experience* is a great work. My interpretation can be only the record of my view of the work, which is so comprehensive in its treatment of many problems that I can notice only a few of them. Emphasis may be laid upon features that are of less importance in the author's mind than others, for the understanding of the work is sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, he who has courage to wrestle with the problem of Reality should have a grateful hearing. For who has yet solved the problem? Who has left nothing to be said? May not, too, each man's thought and feeling on the subject be a factor in the problem? As Kant taught us, the disposition to metaphysics itself calls for explanation, and, if I mistake not, each man's personal view is likewise a factor, however insignificant, in the problem of Reality. Hence I do not write in a polemic spirit, but with deep appreciation of the author's effort to throw light upon the supreme problem. With these preliminary remarks, I desire to pass in review some of the more important arguments which, I think, bear upon the theme, "The Foundation of Theology." I shall first present the arguments to which I wish to call attention, reserving a few critical remarks for the closing words.

We agree with our author as to the problem of metaphysics and as to the manner of its solution. The problem is to exhibit the nature of Being or Reality which can be, for us as knowing, nothing other than the content of our conscious experience. Hence Being and Experience are one, and metaphysics is "the metaphysics of experience." That is, the reality we have access to is reality as known and when known, and the task of metaphysics is accomplished by an analysis and synthesis of the factors in the content of conscious experience (Vol. I, pp. 2-6). As to the critical examination of the faculty of knowledge prior to attempting the analysis of conscious experience for the construction of metaphysics, our author holds that it would be full of assumptions which make it impossible to form a metaphysics solely upon the basis of experience. Kant limited knowledge

to experience, and our author regards himself as continuing the work of Kant by confining the analysis to experience (Preface, p. xi), and maintains that he is truer to Kant's position than Kant himself by insisting that this analysis of conscious experience shall be undertaken without any assumptions. We shall not, therefore, speak of powers of knowledge, of a self that knows, and of the noumenal reality which it is hoped our powers of knowledge may reach.

On the contrary, what those powers are, and what the term "powers" means, will be disclosed, if at all, by the results of the very work which they are engaged in doing (I, 8). . . . Consciousness, therefore, as distinguished from its objects, is the thing to be interrogated. (Preface, p. xiv.) . . . Being of which we can and Being of which we cannot have positive and verifiable knowledge are explicanda; the answer to every question concerning them must be found, if at all, by interrogating consciousness; with this position, any *a priori* assumption whatever is inconsistent.

We may remark in passing that the author's position on this point is practically unassailable, but it is one easily abandoned for another which seems strong because of its assumptions. Do we not know a world of objects beyond us interacting with ourselves, and is not our knowledge a mediation between our real selves and these real objects? To say that cognitive states of consciousness bearing as their content Being are all, and that self and its objects are only phases of this conscious experience, is apparently to take the ground from beneath our feet. Yet, when asked if it is possible to transcend conscious experience in order to arrive at a truly real self and things, we have to admit that we cannot even for the purposes of metaphysics and theology. Questions concerning ultimate Reality can only be decided from the standpoint of conscious experience itself. Professor Ladd² objects that this view is too narrow on the ground that it is only a philosophized psychology, leaving out of view the practical life; but I think our author intends to embrace the entire man in conscious experience, the interrogation of which alone can decide the bearing of the practical life upon our knowledge of the nature of ultimate Reality.

Although I am not in this particular following our author, it is convenient to discuss the foundation of theology as presented by him in connection with the three problems of God, freedom, and immortality. It was Kant who in his *Critique of the Practical Reason* found it necessary to make these postulates in the interests of moral and religious faith. I am confident that we still have to determine the philosophical foundation of theology along these lines. The problem of freedom involves the discus-

²*Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 22 f.

sion of the nature of the *ego*, whether it be a reality or only a phase of the cosmic order; what its relation to the body may be; and what its special relations to its own states in cognition and in moral activity are. The problem of God involves a discussion of the Absolute Unity and its final conception, if we can conceive the Absolute at all, involving of course the question of divine Personality, and the relation to the world-order and to man. The problem of immortality raises the question of its possibility and the mode of conceiving such an existence.

First, the problem of freedom, involving a discussion of the reality and nature of the self. There are two possible views concerning the reality of the soul—the actualist's and the substantialist's. The actualist is one who maintains that only conscious states as such and in their totality constitute the soul or mind. The substantialist holds that the states of consciousness are the possessions and manifestations of a real agency or spirit. The actualist's view harmonizes more readily with that metaphysics which regards the soul as only a transient phase of the cosmic order, entirely determined by that order, whether the ultimate principle be spiritual, material, or unknown. The substantialist's view for some thinkers seems to harmonize more readily with the conceptions of creation by the divine Person and of freedom in cognitive, moral, and religious activity. Our author is an actualist and an empiricist in his view of the soul, opposing Kant in his *a priori* transcendentalism and all others who maintain a "pure" or "real" *ego*; nor does he lose an opportunity to score the substantialists, whose theory he crudely interprets to mean some sort of changeless entity or "pure being" that is hidden behind the states of consciousness, and in some mysterious way possesses and unifies those states. We turn now to the author's view of the self, both psychological and metaphysical; and first the psychological.

In order to trace the development of the self from the lowest form of conscious experience, the author supposes that, if we could by some means get at the content of a single instant of consciousness at the beginning, we should discover a consciousness neither of a self nor of an external world, but only of a single sensation, *e. g.*, a sound *C*. This sensation fades, becoming a representative factor *c* to unite with *D*, a new experience, in the perception *cD*. But there is no need of assuming an *ego* to react upon the sensation in perceiving; the sensation *D* and the retrospective state *c*, representing the former sensation *C*, unite of themselves in the perception *cD*. This union of one conscious state, be it sensation or perception, with the retrospective conscious state representative of a former sensational or perceptual experience, in a new unity, the present perception, is for our

author the main fact of our experience and the clue to his philosophy. Reflective perception as thus understood is simply a conscious state in which an object is presented involving also a preceding object formerly presented to the senses (I, 113). This union takes place without any subject to synthesize the sensational or perceptual state with the retrospective or reflective state. At this point our author criticizes English empiricism because it takes the atomistic view of consciousness and creates an artificial separation between conscious states that have the whole history of their life together (I, 129). The atomistic view of consciousness, this English empiricism, plays into the hands of Kantian transcendentalism, namely, by requiring some transcendental hypothesis to establish a nexus between its isolated atoms of perception (I, 131).

The implication, of course, is that, since the several conscious states link themselves together retrospectively, the hypothesis of a combining subject of the states with categories or ways of acting in the synthetic process is superfluous.³

Concerning the development of the consciousness of the self as subject arguments too numerous to recount in detail are presented. Suffice it to say that the conscious states transform themselves, finally, into an external world, a human body, and an *ego* distinguishing itself from, yet knowing, the world, possessing the body and being self-conscious. We might readily suppose that this transformation of the conscious states is the development of a "real" individual, but to assume this is to assume what Mr. Hodgson constantly repudiates. There are only conscious states which become in turn body, external world, and self in contrast to world and body, yet in peculiar but different relations to world and body. The author's own words may be of assistance.

Speaking concerning the lower stages of the process of development, we may say that a given conscious state—*e. g.*, the perception of anything—is both existence and knowing; the same state which is the thing is also the knowing; *i. e.*, another aspect of this conscious state which is the thing existing is also knowing the thing as existing:

Looking at the process from our own point of view as observers *ab extra*, and not as it would appear to its own subject or percipient at the time, we may say that the process-content of consciousness reflects in existing and exists in reflecting. As reflecting, it is a part of knowing; as existing, it is a part of Being. One and the same process-content of consciousness is at once knowledge and existence, though this distinction could not be consciously drawn or perceived by its subject at the time supposed, because at the time supposed he has no knowledge of himself as a subject or percipient. (I, 84.)

³On the whole subject see Vol. I, chaps. ii, iii.

But what, I would ask, is meant by a "subject or percipient at the time," since "it is the foregone conclusion that the conscious life is analyzable without remainder into ideas or presentations"?⁴ Admitting a subject in process of development to self-consciousness, we grant that a conscious state may be at once a cognition and a real thing, and it is out of such states by acts of a subject performing synthetic judgments that the world of reality is constructed—itself for the individual a conscious world. I have made this statement, not for the sake of argument, but to bring out more clearly the difference between the actualist's conception of the self as an automaton—a series of states having only a nominal subject—and the substantialist's conception of a real active spiritual principle.

Continuing the exposition of the author's view, we are told that the percipient, of course not yet self-conscious, unable to recall the conscious processes through which he has passed, takes the perceived things—really modes of consciousness—as *bona fide* things and, particularly through sight and touch, knows them as an external world of real, individual, and independent things. The constant and central object of all these material things is his own body. Having taken both things and his own body—both being permanent groups of conscious states—as material realities, how does consciousness break loose from this material and become distinguished from the material body and the world of things? A child having seen a dog in a basket goes again to find the dog, now absent; the result is a consciousness of the anticipation and of the fact that things may not agree with their anticipated behavior. Hence there is a distinction between the thought of the things and the things themselves. Consciousness and the body as yet undistinguished are now the subject in contrast with the rest of the material world. In other words, Mr. Hodgson is skilfully showing what is sometimes called the bi-partition of consciousness into subject and object, both sides of the antithesis being conscious states. Another step in the argument is as follows: Things change, body changes accordingly, and consciousness or experience changes as well. These changes are observed by the percipient, who now interprets his experience as the action of things upon his body, which in turn causes his conscious experience to be different or to change. This would lead to the self-distinction of consciousness from the body as its seat and from things whereby the percipient is conscious of himself, of his body, and of the external world, forgetting, however, that each and all together are only different groups of conscious states located in or related to each other (I, 322-25; also I, 205-337).

I have already implied that Mr. Hodgson had no place for a "real"

⁴ANDREW SETH, *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 95.

go as an active agent; hence consciousness is in no sense an activity; we as consciousness are a series of conscious states; as such, we are conscious automata, we do nothing. This conception of the self is in keeping with the summary way in which Mr. Hodgson disposes of the time-honored category of cause and effect. Having shown that the process of perception culminates in the abstraction of the perceived thing—really only a mode of consciousness—from its immediate relation to the percipient, forming with others the external, material world of things regarded as existing apart from the subject as individual and independent realities, the percipient forms the idea of any such being—this holds of perceived persons as well—considered in action as a cause and of a corresponding change in another being as effect (I, 325). Thus the conception of cause and effect is “common-sense” and unscientific, for which must be substituted that of “real condition and conditionate,” which is implicit in the “common-sense” view of the causal relation. Indeed, the common-sense form precedes and is the presupposition of the scientific, and remains standing side by side with it, as well in scientific as in non-scientific minds. (I, 326.)

It is necessary carefully to review this treatment of the causal relation, always one of the most difficult problems of metaphysics, whose solution determines the character of the speculative system, as it certainly does in the case of our author. That his treatment of the causal relation is intended to be even the fulcrum of his lever for upsetting many theories is evident from the following statement:

The great crucial and fundamental question which divides philosophers at the present day . . . is . . . the question whether agency belongs to and is exerted by consciousness, or by something which is not consciousness, though an object of it. This is not the same question as that which divides Idealists and Materialists. To me, those who contend for consciousness being the exorter of agency are *ipso facto* Idealists; but not all are Materialists who contend for the exorter of agency being something which is not consciousness. Still, whenever experience is taken as the basis and test of philosophy, matter is the only ground upon which the contention of the non-Idealistic school can be determined or brought to an issue, since matter is the only positively known object which can be held to be at once non-conscious and real. Hence the first question to arise in an experiential Metaphysic is that of the independent existence of Matter, which must be established, if at all, by analysis of that which we call our knowledge of it. This analysis . . . involves, by showing the necessity for, the substitution of the conception of *Real Condition* for the Aristotelic and Scholastic conception of *Cause*; a substitution which will be found to work a cardinal change in our whole manner of regarding the universe, or whatever other name we may give to the total object-matter of philosophy. (Preface, xi, xii.)

Recalling, as was said above, that the percepts become objectified as a world of material, external things in relation to the one constant body with whose experiences the consciousness is identified and from which the consciousness is finally distinguished, we have material things whose changes are followed by changes in the body, and the changes of body are followed by changes of conscious experience. For common-sense, this means that external things (or persons) produce changes in our bodies, and our bodies in turn produce changes in consciousness. But, for reflection, there is no causal relation or agency; for reflection, things are percepts, body is percept or group of conscious states, and the changes of things and of body are likewise percepts following one upon another as condition and conditionate factors of consciousness; and, when consciousness is distinguished from the body with which it is at first blended, consciousness becomes always only the conditionate of body; *i. e.*, material things condition (not act upon) body, body conditions consciousness. It must be noted, too, that the conceptions of real condition and conditionate are only modes of understanding the course of nature—modes of the order of knowledge, which is the order of reflective perceptions, in contrast with the order of existence, which is the presentation or sense-perception order, *i. e.*, the course of nature as perceived—both orders being states of consciousness (I, 334-37).

Real conditions and conditionates do not as such exist in the course of nature but only facts or objects of perception which are conceived under these terms. What we gain by so conceiving them is a generalized knowledge—a knowledge of general facts or laws of nature from which other facts may be deduced or inferred. But the whole content of this conceived order, taken as a content, belongs to the order of knowledge as distinguished from the order of existence, or course of nature itself. It is a means of discovering and understanding the facts; but those facts only, and not the conceptions which embody the understanding of them, are the existents of the order of existence.

To attribute laws of nature or the character of being a condition to the course of nature itself (still more, to say that in nature there are *causes* and *effects*) is to make entities of generalities. (I, 382.)

Again, if the objects of nature are, for reflection, only states of consciousness, and condition and conditionate only concepts of the order of knowledge of these perceptual states, is there anything over and above the states of the individual consciousness, be it a "real" *ego*, other persons, or a material world, that is non-conscious? In reply, it is shown that our knowledge of the material world, acquired chiefly through tactual resistance and visual percepts, requires a further explanation than the analysis of conscious experience can afford. In short, since certain groups of visual and

tactual perceptions have a coherence and comparative permanence of their own, in contra-distinction from the permanence of our objective thoughts of those same groups of perceptions,

we are therefore compelled to have recourse to Matter, as the only real existent, positively known to us, which is also a real condition. In Matter, we must find the only positively known source of the Real conditioning in or belonging to the course of nature. . . . Why, for instance, should the immediate perceptions which form the complex, say of a paper-knife handle, occur in their actually perceived order? There is literally no answer to these questions in the immediate perceptions themselves. They force us, therefore, to the inference of some permanently acting real condition which, as an object of inference, is and must be a represented object in the first instance.

In short, we must by inference from the requirements of our perceptions think of Matter as existing "in some form or forms which would be actually both visible and tangible, if we had sensibilities sufficiently acute." Such is the attempt made to arrive at the certainty of the trans-subjective. (I, 392-402.)

Included within the domain of Matter is the physical nervous basis of consciousness, itself non-conscious, upon which as real condition consciousness in all its forms and phases depends as conditionate; "or, in other words, consciousness as an existent is the conditionate of really existing Matter" (I, 408-21). It is materialism in psychology. The higher processes of psychic life, such as thought even in its most refined judgments and constructions, and such as feelings, emotions, desires, volitions, etc., are also only the conscious conditionates of brain-processes which are the real conditions (III, 310, 311). This position is defended at length in the treatment of the foundation of logic and of ethics (III, 229-384; IV, 1-251).

The result supposed to be proved, it had best be stated at once, is the complete parallelism of the bodily and the mental—the denial, therefore, of any real causality to consciousness, which remains the inert accompaniment of a succession of physical changes over which it has no control. In a word, the result is the doctrine of human automatism . . . conscious automatism.⁵

These words of Professor Seth may be applied to Mr. Hodgson's theory, if we understand them to mean that all initiative agency belongs to the brain-processes, never to consciousness. The discussion of the will and its freedom is a good illustration of the theory. Volition is only the conscious phase of a nerve-process which is the real agency, itself a part of the cosmic process. Certain brain-cells known as automatic may be supposed to be the real agency in a volition as well as in the higher forms of conscious

⁵ANDREW SETH, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

activities, Indeed, man is in all his life a conscious automaton. For example, judgment involves discrimination, selective attention, and volition.

This choice [between alternatives discovered by analysis] must be made, and this assent given—both of them volitional acts if considered as two—or there is no judgment—no provisionally completed thought (III, 313). . . . Assertion means . . . the intra-cerebral conscious act of assenting to something as true (III, 316). [Indeed] we may speak of thought itself as an activity, provided always we bear in mind that the activity and its exercise really belong to the cerebral organs or organ, and not to their dependent concomitant, the mode of consciousness (III, 310, 311).

Nor is the origination of error an exception, since “it is the volitional element in thought which makes error and fallacy possible;” which means of course, that error is only a mode of consciousness, and thus a conditionate of brain-processes as real condition, which in turn are a part of the cosmic process (III, 335). The alternatives between which choice is made are in reality conflicting brain-processes whose conscious conditionates are the alternatives discovered by reflective analysis in thought and morals. As regards these alternatives,

what appears as the tendency of each to displace the other must consequently be ascribed to some conflict, or opposite behavior of some sort or other, on the part of the neuro-cerebral processes which support them, say an increase of energy in the one, accompanied by a withdrawal of energy from the other. (IV, 33.)

The final choice or decision between the alternatives is the conscious conditionate of the outcome of the conflicting brain-processes (IV, 35). This final nerve-adjustment in which the conflict of processes ceases is subordinated to the natural law of self-preservation which governs all the physiological processes which take place in living organisms (IV, 45).

It is, in fact, the neuro-cerebral process supporting moments of self-consciousness which are meant when we say that *we* give the greatest force to the most apparently reasonable action, or that *we* are the agents in acts of choice (IV, 53, 54). . . . If we want a definition of the will, it may now be supplied from a psychological source; we may define it as an exercise of nerve-energy accompanied by the sense of choosing between alternatives. (IV, 20.)

This is, in brief, the whole theory of volition both in intellectual and moral choice.

From the above standpoint, Mr. Hodgson proceeds to define and maintain the freedom of the will as the *sine qua non* of moral action and ethical science. One experiences some surprise to find the freedom of the will maintained upon such an apparently deterministic basis, but he grapples manfully with the problem of conceiving the universe as such a unity as

will render free moral action possible. I am confident, too, that Mr. Hodgson's theistic critic has some lessons to learn from him.

First of all the *de facto* order of nature excludes alternatives. This *de facto* course of nature we conceive as a sequence and coexistence of actions and events taking place between material things which are real conditions and conditionates of one another. The laws of nature are our conceptual expressions of the perceptual uniformities of the *de facto* course of nature. Laws of nature exist, therefore, only in our thought, not in the course of nature itself. Now, such being the course of nature and such being natural law,

has freedom any place among these conceptions under which we are compelled to bring the *de facto* order of real and physical existence, in order to understand it? Or, otherwise stated, are there any facts in that *de facto* order (which, it must be remembered, excludes alternative possibilities) which compel us to form the conception of freedom in order to characterize them? (IV, 124.)

We must answer this question, first, negatively, by asking what sort of freedom we are trying to conceive. We do not mean that whatever existences we are to regard as free are to be regarded as

free from the laws of nature inasmuch as they are parts of that *de facto* order of nature, the whole of which exhibits those *de facto* uniformities for which laws of nature are the name. Neither is it intended to declare them free from being acted on by extraneous forces. . . . It follows that in speaking of agents as free, it is intended to declare them free from compulsion or constraint by extraneous forces, and free for actions resulting from their own nature and constitution (IV, 125). . . . [Indeed] if freedom in volition is a real fact, it is itself an instance exemplifying laws of nature. (IV, 139.)

Since the agents are parts of the *de facto* order of nature, they have to be conceived

in connection and interaction with other parts of that order. Consequently it is only so far as it is free for acting in accordance with its own nature and constitution, and from compulsion or constraint by extraneous forces, that an agent or its action can truly be called free; while conversely it can and must be called free, so far as, or in the respects in which, it is capable of so acting.

A weathercock is free to turn in all directions of the plane in which it is, free within these limits to heed the change of wind; a seed, put into the ground in favorable, and protected from unfavorable, conditions, is free to develop its nature. So also

the cerebral organ of volition, in its action of deliberating and choosing . . . is free in exactly the same sense, allowing for its differences of kind. It is free for that action of part upon part which we call deliberating between, and thereby

changing the strength of motives, and deciding for that which, in consequence of that action, becomes the strongest; it is free from constraint preventing its action in this particular way. The physiological brain organism is free, so far as the interaction of its parts is not subjected to extraneous constraints; and its resulting action is free so far as it is determined by the internal action of its parts.

It determines itself according to its own nature. Thus

the fact of freedom is . . . deeply rooted in the *de facto* course of nature . . . and is as independent of the conception of alternative possibilities as that *de facto* order of events is itself conceived to be.

Hence we may adopt Hobbes's definition of freedom:

Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsic quality of the agent. (IV, 126-29.)

Recalling the statement that consciousness is always and only the conditionate of brain-processes as the real condition, conscious alternatives are only the conscious correlates of the interacting parts of the brain, and decision and voluntary choice are only the conscious correlates of the outcome of this interaction of the parts and the neuro-cerebral mechanism, and thus there is the consciousness of being free in the volition.

We have now arrived at the point at which it is necessary to introduce Mr. Hodgson's metaphysical view of the Unity of Being. While, as shown above, Matter in its particular phase as neural mechanism is the real condition of consciousness, Matter itself is not infinite, but is in turn the conditionate of an unknown realm of Real Conditions. On the other hand, consciousness may, indeed, so far as its *genesis* is concerned, be the mere conditionate of Matter, but this fact by no means accounts for its *nature*, which must be conceived from the standpoint of that unknown realm of real conditions—the unknown Power, which embraces Matter as its conditionate and also consciousness in its *nature*, but not in its *genesis*, which is always in connection with processes of the neural mechanism.

That this unknown Power cannot be defined is shown by the fact that it can be conceived neither as Matter nor as a universal consciousness; *i. e.*, while accepting materialism in psychology, philosophical materialism is denied, likewise idealism, whose primary tenet is that consciousness is the only real existent. There are evidences in the data of consciousness that Matter has had a beginning in time and may not be limited in space, and that it is only a conditionate of real conditions beyond and unlike itself—indeed, totally unknown (IV, 275, 304-8, 310, 311, 315, 370). Nor is idealism tenable whose

primary tenet is that consciousness (in some one or more of its forms) is the only . . . real existent, the *causa sui et mundi*, generating out of itself whatever appears to be not-consciousness, as Matter, Force, Mind, for instance; any such appearance being therefore illusory. (IV, 371-73.)

The effect of idealism may perhaps be summed up in the phrase, there is no Being but Knowing, or Being and Knowing are one and the same (IV, 373). Chief among the arguments against idealism is that consciousness can never make or cause anything to exist, let alone being *causa sui* (IV 374). Or, again, how could consciousness as such an efficient agency account for the experience of Matter—its force, coherence, resistance and occupancy of space (IV, 383)? It being impossible to regard the individual consciousness as able to account for its experience of Matter—which would be solipsism—we may perhaps assume for this purpose a universal world-consciousness. But how can we think of such a universal consciousness as omniscient, embracing all the factors of individual consciousness in a unity of consciousness? How can we understand the relation of the universal to the individual consciousness? Since we cannot answer these questions, we must reject the hypothesis of a universal consciousness as untenable. Consequently, we may infer from the data of the individual consciousness some existence other than consciousness. We have seen that this existence cannot be Matter, although Matter includes the physical order as well as the brain mechanism which is the conditionate of the genesis of the individual consciousness; rather is Matter itself a conditionate; also, since this inferred existence cannot be any form of consciousness, it must be an unknown Power, embracing in itself the Seen and the Unseen. Although the results of our theoretical analysis of conscious experience are negative, since we reach the conception of the Unknown Power, yet these results have also a positive aspect, since we know that there is such a Power, and that it is in its nature unknown.

I have now completed the exposition of as much of the theoretical portion of Mr. Hodgson's work as bears most directly upon my theme, the foundation of theology, although it has been impossible to present the arguments chosen in detail. What has already been said forms the philosophical basis of theology—which, according to our author, is the only basis—as will soon be made evident. Thus far the example of Kant has been followed who, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, reached a negative and skeptical outcome concerning the knowledge of the existence of God as a Person. Mr. Hodgson also follows Kant's example in the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, which shows the necessity for the postulate of the personal God to satisfy the needs of moral and religious faith. Likewise Mr.

Hodgson insists upon the distinction between the conception of the Unknown Power of the theoretical reason and the conception of the infinite Personality of the practical life (IV, 222) which expresses the phenomena of conscience in a summary manner. All that can be said theoretically is that this Power is coextensive and coeternal with Existence in its entirety, whether revealed to man through the media of sense or not. It is, in other words, the Power or Agency which is the fact or object thought of by our conception of Real Conditioning, whether positively known to us or not, and therefore belonging, not only to the seen world, but also to that which is unseen and infinite beyond it. This is the object of that idea of Man's which is the speculative basis of his idea of God. The raising or completion of this speculative basis into that full idea is due to the moral ideas and feelings which are the creatures of conscience. (IV, 203-6.)

When thus completed, the conception of the unknown Power becomes the idea of an omniscient witness of our immanent acts of choice and is the idea in which religion, properly so called, has its origin. (IV, 346.)

Conscience itself, it may be stated, is that mode of consciousness in which there is a judgment of volitions according to the criterion of the anticipated harmony or discord which they tend to produce in the character of the agent, and actions which are voluntary are right or wrong accordingly (IV, 66-81). This is not eudæmonism, nor is it self-realization, unless the self be understood to be the self-character of the present, and the action willed that which is judged to express and harmonize the self, and in this harmony there is an accompanying happiness (IV, 79-81).

Again,

conscience is imperative in no other sense than that in which desires, motives, reasons, or judgments are imperative, which involve a perception of preferability. (IV, 87.)

That is, the contemplated act is viewed as preferable because of its evident harmony with the character and its anticipated tendency to preserve and promote this unity of the character—the self. The imperativeness of conscience may be, as concerns its degree of intensity, accounted for by the fact that the principle of self-preservation has caused the nervous mechanism at the basis of the conscious, volitional processes to become organized to certain courses of action so that

every act of disobedience, or even of evasion, is to some extent a disintegration of the cerebral system of the subject, destroying the *consensus* of its energies, a disintegration originating in its own action. (IV, 88.)

Another reason for the degree of intensity in connection with the judgments of conscience is metaphysical,

belonging to them as modes of knowing which have an infinite future as the object of their anticipation, and also are attended with peculiar emotional feelings, the existence of which is not explicable in any other way than by referring them to conscience as their source. (IV, 87.)

Corresponding with the varying degrees of imperativeness in connection with the judgments of conscience is the sense of transgressing an authority when the deed does not follow the dictates of conscience. This is a new kind of painful quality—it is remorse of conscience; as felt by the subject contemplating his wrong act, it is the sense of guilt. When the subject views his volitional act “as putting him out of harmony with the moral law apprehended as universally valid for all consciously active beings, it is *sin*” (IV, 193). This sense of sin is one of the data upon which the idea of God is founded. Corresponding terms describe the experience in view of a good volitional act; there is approval and a sense of harmony with the universal moral law. This, too, is a factor in the foundation of the idea of God.

Another step in the development of the idea of God is that in primitive times there can be no exact analysis of the phenomena of conscience. In due time, however, the inevitable law of human reason to explain all phases of conscious experience turns to these moral phenomena. The explanation will, of course, be at this stage of development anthropomorphic. At first the subject knows the body as the seat of consciousness—there is no sharp distinction between body and spirit. Natural objects are accordingly explained after the analogy of the self—they are selves, persons. At a later stage, when consciousness is distinguished from the body, by the help of dreams, etc., natural objects are viewed as ruled over by spirits, which are distinguished from, and not as before identified with, these objects. These ruling spirits will form a hierarchy, their respective ranks being determined by the magnitude and general impressiveness of the natural objects over which sovereignty is exercised. When the awakening human reason, unable to analyze the factors that are really in the phenomena of conscience, seeks to explain the imperativeness of the moral law, the sense of guilt, of remorse, and of sin in view of a wrong action, or of approval and peace in view of a good action, how easy it is to regard this most wonderful and impressive of human experiences as the direct manifestation—indeed, as the very voice—of God, who is then thought of as the ever-present personal witness of our inmost heart. Thus the conscience is the source of the idea of the supreme moral Person and Judge of all (IV, 203). Herein lies also the origin of religion.

In thus completing our Idea of God, by ascribing a moral nature and moral perfection to the Power which is the really conditioning agency of the universe, we do as a fact personify and deify that Power, just as our primitive ancestors personified and deified the particular existents or forces of Nature, including their own departed progenitors. (IV, 205 f., 1-227.)

The only conclusion possible is, of course, that the conception of God as a supreme moral Person is simply a comprehensive summary of the phenomena of conscience, not speculatively to be taken as real knowledge of this Power which sustains the universe. The positive knowledge that there is such an Unknown Power to which neither blame, nor praise, nor, least of all, moral goodness and self-consciousness with interest in human life can be attributed, is all that is speculatively tenable in the idea of God, and constitutes the only speculative basis of theology. The remainder of the idea of God is a convenient, but not ultimately significant, superstructure.

Consequently, and in one word, we no longer speculatively conceive of God as a Mind, creating and governing Matter, or creating and governing other minds. Not, however, because proof has failed that God is a Mind; but because proof has failed that Mind is a reality. . . . He is now conceived as the whole of that Power of real conditioning, of which the real conditioning of every human and individual consciousness is an infinitesimal portion and derivative. (IV, 208, 209.) . . . Faith in God stands to its possessor in the place of knowledge.

His religious ideas of God cannot be appealed to as containing speculative truth "in controversy with others who are either irreligious, or who clothe their religion in different ideas" (IV, 224).

We must not, however, understand Mr. Hodgson to teach that the conception of the Infinite as self-conscious moral Personality is entirely unfounded and illusory. It is rather inadequate; indeed, it is a harmless, but convenient and allowable, way of expressing our confidence in the requirements of conscience, if we only remind ourselves that this conception is not really Knowledge, and that the infinite Power escapes our theoretical Knowledge altogether.

Another important conception to which the practical reason leads us is that of a future life. Like Kant, Mr. Hodgson shows that this practical belief in another life is not knowledge; yet, on the other hand, it is not entirely without a speculative basis, and it is impossible to show that theoretically the conception of immortality is contradictory. Instead of being contradictory, and so impossible, there are facts which make another life probable. As this belief is an accompaniment of religious faith, in consequence of which theology must consider it, it must be treated in connection with the foundation of theology.

Since consciousness is the conditionate of Matter in the form of brain mechanism, which in turn is the conditionate of the Unknown, both forming a unity, it is conceivable that the unseen and unknown realm of conditions may be modified by the reaction of the nervous mechanism which is the condition of desires, emotions, and volitions. Hence we may say, speaking popularly, that our volitional acts modify the unknown world of real conditions, it being really the brain-processes at the basis of conscious volitions which effect this modification (IV, 318-25). As a correlate of this speculative possibility is the fact that conscience represents our volitional acts as making a difference with us in the indefinite future, which consequently suffers determination by what we do as moral beings both as regards what we shall be and experience and what kind of companions we shall have and what we ourselves shall be able to do. These are practical beliefs, growing out of the experience of conscience and inseparable from the effort to obey its dictates (IV, 339-48). Is a future life speculatively conceivable? Yes, upon the hypothesis of an unknown region of Matter which may be modified by the brain-activity at the basis of our desires, emotions, and volitions, so that we may say we are daily preparing ourselves a "spiritual" body to support our conscious life of the future when we have finished with the one we now have—a most interesting theory which I cannot now present more in detail. It will be observed, however, that, while a future life is postulated by the moral, it is also shown theoretically possible, and there is no contradiction which can nullify the significance of a belief in it (IV, 390-96).

A similar view is held concerning a divine revelation; it is conceivable, and there is no theoretical contradiction of it. The belief in a divine revelation is a phase of the practical life. Morality passes over into religion when, in sincere obedience to the dictates of conscience, the law of conscience is identified with the unknown Power that sustains the universe which is now viewed as a self-conscious moral Person. Given this religious faith, a revelation is conceivable and reasonable. Religion, then, does not rest on revelation, but revelation on religion. Moreover, a divine revelation is speculatively conceivable: since consciousness in all its phases is the conditionate of Matter in the form of cerebral mechanism, and since Matter is in turn the conditionate of the unknown Power, new and unique experiences may appear in the individual consciousness, which unique expression in the individual consciousness the practical reason regards as the revelation of the divine Person. Consequently, this revelation is, from the standpoint of the individual, his own insight into the experience of the moral and religious consciousness. The test of the validity and worth of the

revelation is, for example, the familiar saying, "The Bible finds me," *i. e.*, the revelation is recognized as giving expression to the heart's moral and religious needs and aspirations. Christ was founder of the Christian religion because he interpreted the human heart to itself; Christianity is the universal religion and revelation because it expresses and fulfils man's moral and religious needs (IV, 216-18, 399-418).

We are now prepared to show the province and problem of theology in its constructive aspect. Theology is strictly limited to the practical, deals only with the practical conceptions which men formulate to express their moral and religious beliefs concerning their relations to the divine Person, and is not at all to be regarded as speculatively true. This view differs from that commonly accepted, which really puts theology in the realm of philosophy as its most important and culminating feature, maintaining that there is an implicit harmony between revelation and natural theology, which afford each other a reciprocal support, and that both together form a trustworthy system of knowledge concerning the existence and nature of God and of his relations to man and the world (IV, 398-402).

Theology, according to Mr. Hodgson, as "the formulation and systematization of the convictions of Religion or of Faith," must be distinguished from that Religion or Faith. Since the conceptions used are of necessity taken from the prevalent philosophy of a given period, theology is not a fixed science and will change with the changing theoretical views. The abiding factor is the Religion, the Faith. Applying these principles to the Christian theology, there was first the faith, then the formulated expression. Christ led the disciples to faith in God as loving them, which evoked in them the effort to obey conscience and to do the will of God, who was conceived as both just and merciful. These were the essential redemptive teachings of Jesus, whose personality seized upon them so powerfully as to impress these beliefs deep into the hearts of the disciples and lift them up to a new life.

But the moment which robbed his disciples of their beloved Master roused them to sustained reflection. Where and what were the hopes which their belief in Him had inspired in them? That reflection was the beginning of a theology. (IV, 409.)

And the thing the disciples and believers generally have sought to do has been to express in systematic form the significance of their faith, using the terminology available and feeling the modifying influence of prevailing systems of thought. This is always an important and difficult task as the systematization must rest upon a philosophical basis, against which

no valid speculative objection can be raised. . . . It must be a theoretical statement of man's practical relation to the Universe, as believed by those only who are believers in the Religion of which it is the embodiment, and must besides be incontrovertible on speculative grounds. The Theology must be at once speculatively incontrovertible, and an intellectual embodiment of the practical Faith. (IV, 422, 423.)

Although Mr. Hodgson closes his work with valuable suggestions concerning the theology which today may hope for acceptance by all classes, we may pass them, as they do not bear directly upon our topic—the foundation of theology.

A critical estimate of Mr. Hodgson's conception of theology and its philosophical basis proposed by him is challenged by the requirement that the philosophical basis of theology shall be such that no valid speculative objection can be raised against it. The point of the criticisms which I am about to make is that he has not been true to the facts of conscious experience.

Take, for example, the use made of condition and conditionate in explaining the synthetic processes of the perceptive act. He grants that there is a synthesis of sensational and representative factors, but says that the cerebral mechanism as the synthesizing agency "is as much in harmony with the actual experience as if the blank were filled up by the action of an immaterial agency" (I, 449; II, 257). We may grant that brain and conscious processes are parallel, and that the conscious synthetic aspect of perception doubtless has a parallel brain state; but this is only stating the fact that two processes, nervous and conscious, occur together, and while parallelism is irrefutable, it does not explain the synthesizing processes of consciousness. Besides, to say that brain-mechanism is the real synthesizing agency is to reinstate the conception of the causal relation which has been rejected in favor of condition and conditionate. If we are not to accept brain-mechanism as the synthesizing agency, and with Mr. Hodgson reject the atomistic sensationalism of the English empirical school, whereby individual conscious states are in some way associated together forming the perception, what can this synthesizing agency be? There are two reasonable hypotheses either of them better than the proposed cerebral agency; namely, a finite spirit developing to full self-consciousness, or the Infinite Mind expressing itself in the developing cognitive processes of the finite consciousness. Who has ever really overthrown Kant's essential argument in the *Deduction of the Categories* against empiricism, that the particulars of sense, received successively, must be reproduced and synthesized according to the forms, categories, and principles of the subject that is finally to know the unitary

object in a unity of experience, and know its own self as identical in this experience? Kant said that, according to empiricism, each representation would, in its present state, be a new one, and in no wise belonging to the act by which they are to be produced one after the other, and the manifold in it would never form a whole because deprived of that unity which consciousness alone can impart to it. [In short], that unity of consciousness would be impossible, if the mind, in the knowledge of the manifold, could not become conscious of the identity of function, by which it unites the manifold synthetically in one knowledge.⁶

Mr. Hodgson may object that this applies only to the "atomistic" empiricism, not to his own, and that the "mind" referred to is only the empirical *ego*-aspect of consciousness for which he himself has provided. We may, indeed, criticize Kant, but his essential meaning was an active, synthesizing agency—a mind—to fill up the blank which Mr. Hodgson thinks is adequately filled by the cerebral mechanism which he regards as the true agency in the synthesis, while the synthetic aspect of consciousness is only a passive conditionate of this brain-activity. In my judgment, we must assume a spiritual synthesizing principle, either a finite mind in process of development, or the infinite Mind expressing itself in the developing finite consciousness. T. H. Green, holding the latter view, maintained that perception can be understood only on the assumption of a synthesizing function which is more than the factors synthesized, and that this synthesizing agency can least of all be accounted for upon the basis of the cerebral mechanism, although this cerebral mechanism is operative in the process; for "every effort fails to trace a genesis of knowledge out of anything which is not in form and principle, knowledge itself."⁷ Besides, cerebral mechanism is a psychic conceptual construction, and to say that the functions of the *ego* are to be explained by one of its own constructions is certainly difficult to understand.

Similar remarks may be made concerning Mr. Hodgson's conception of the will and its freedom. The real agency in volitional acts, we have seen, is conceived to be the cerebral mechanism, which is a part of the natural order. This natural order excludes alternatives. Hence "freedom" is thought to apply to actions which result from the nature and constitution of the agency, in this case the cerebral mechanism, acting part on part, yet itself within the order of nature. We may grant the implied parallelism between the nervous and the conscious, with the observation that it only states a coincidence, but does not explain it; we may grant the application

⁶*Critique of Pure Reason*, MÜLLER'S translation, Vol. II, pp. 92-95.

⁷*Prolegomena to Ethics*, sec. 70.

of the term "free" to the actions of an agency which is the part of the Whole, but with the understanding that the Whole is spiritual rather than material or unknown; we grant that such "free" acts which express the nature and constitution of an agency are not rendered inconceivable by the conception of this agency as a factor in the all-embracing Whole. But the real question is: What is the agency that is conceived as "free" in its volitional acts? Is it the cerebral mechanism so ingeniously described by our author? It must be remembered that this mechanism is in the order of nature. Hence the question is whether the volitional processes of consciousness are explained by an agency standing within the order of nature, or whether these volitional processes require the hypothesis of a principle which is itself not in the order of nature? I am confident that we must assume such a spiritual principle, not in the natural order, be it either the finite soul or the infinite Mind manifesting itself in the human consciousness; for man in the processes of knowledge and in the formation of motives, in the words of Green,

exerts a free activity—an activity which is not in time, not a link in the chain of natural becoming, which has no antecedents other than itself, but is self-originated. There is no incompatibility between this doctrine and the admission that all the processes of brain and nerve and tissue, all the functions of life and sense, organic to this activity, . . . have a natural history. There would only be such an incompatibility, if these processes and functions actually constituted or made up the self-distinguishing man, the man capable of knowledge.⁸

Enough has been said to show that the agency which can properly be called "free" is not the cerebral mechanism, although, as our author says, it doubtless does express its nature and constitution in its actions and is so far free. Another and different agency, correlated it may be with the cerebral mechanism—the recognition of this correlation being only a statement of the fact, not an explanation—is required to account for the facts of conscious experience in the processes of knowledge and the formation of motives; to this agency, standing without the order of nature, the term "free in its actions" may be applied. Mr. Hodgson apparently feels the uncertainty of his position when he says that the cerebral process is always the condition of the *genesis*, never of the *nature* of the conscious conditionate which sustains some inconceivable relation to the unknown Power. I wish also to call particular attention to the substitution of "condition and conditionate" for "cause and effect," which are of especial importance at this point. In this substitution the author is not true to our experience which he proposes to analyze, for "condition and conditionate" are unknown

⁸*Op. cit.*, sec. 82.

terms unless they are translated into "cause and effect." It will be observed that by charges of anthropomorphism and the use of this unknown term, "condition and conditionate," he escapes the troublesome analysis of the causal relation which might show that the only assignable meaning of "cause and effect" is grounded in the expression of an intelligent will-agent which we know in our experience. To say that the cerebral mechanism is the real agency in our volitional acts is certainly to attribute to an unknown quantum what we have heretofore believed to be the most characteristic feature of spiritual life. We may go so far as to say that, if true, it has no meaning for us; how, then, can it be true? Whether this spiritual principle which we would assume is a finite reality or a manifestation of the infinite, and what the relations of the finite and the infinite spirits are, are different questions.

A similar reply may be made to Mr. Hodgson's conception that the ultimate Reality is neither Matter nor Mind, but an unknown Power. We must grant, of course, that the negative position cannot be refuted, for it is always possible to deny that knowledge of ultimate Reality is attainable. But to those who take the theory of knowledge seriously, believe knowledge to be possible, and desire to be faithful to actual experience, and to avoid in the analysis of that experience the use of unknown, and consequently meaningless, terms, I would suggest the following in place of a detailed argument in favor of the conception of the ultimate Reality as Mind: First, Mr. Hodgson supports his inference from the data of consciousness to an unknown Power by the use of the conceptions "condition and conditionate" as a substitution for the conception of causal agency, thereby avoiding the analysis of the causal experience of consciousness which would, in my opinion, lead him and us, if true to that experience, to infer a universal Will as the ground of all that is real. We know the real because we experience resistance; how shall we understand this resistance except after the analogy of the self in the experience which we have of our own will-activity? As it is a matter of inference on either of the two theories, which inference is the more satisfactory? Which is more faithful to the content of conscious experience? Secondly, knowledge, assumed to be possible, implies that the reality known is intelligible, and thus the expression of Mind for mind; as we know things in relation which are thus held together in the unity of our consciousness, so Reality which is known is somehow a unity of existences in relation which is conceivable only on the assumption of the supreme Mind of whose thought and will all existences are the manifestations. Thirdly, it is an error to say that inductive and deductive proof as applied in the sciences is of a worth superior to the proof for the existence

of God as Mind; instead, all reasoning, whether inductive or deductive, rests finally upon the trustworthiness of reality as rational; all law—natural, psychical, and intellectual—must be grounded in reality. What conception of ultimate Reality harmonizes so well with these necessities of our thought as the conception of the divine Mind? If we are to conceive this Mind at all, and at the same time be true to our conscious experience, this Mind will be for us, with Lotze, a Perfect Personality of whom our minds are only pale copies.⁹ Fourthly, Erdmann has told us that the special problem of modern philosophy—which, by the way, must be a philosophy expressing the essential meaning of Christianity—is to combine the world-problem of the ancients with the other-world problem of the Middle Ages in a new and higher unity;

no theories will meet the requirements of modern times, nor deserve the name of philosophy, except such as recognize both the here, or real, of antiquity, and the hereafter, or ideal, of the Middle Ages, and attempt to reconcile the two. Any system which left one of these sides out of account, or which did not admit that there was a point where the two coincided, would cease to be philosophical. . . . Henceforth, the path that philosophy follows is not to reach self by starting from the world or from God, but to start from self and find one's way back to a world and to God.¹⁰

Has not Mr. Hodgson, by denying a speculative knowledge of the true Reality "left one of these sides out of account"? If so, is his system a true philosophy of the modern period, since it fails fully to recognize the special problem of modern philosophy? To land us in an absolute negation concerning the Infinite is almost to revise Plotinus, ignores and does not solve the problem of modern thought.

Having considered some of the objections to the philosophical basis of theology proposed by our author, we shall now consider the proposed limitation of theology strictly to the practical sphere with the function of formulating and systematizing the content of moral and religious faith (IV, 402), with only a vague confidence that the construction has ultimate significance as the truth about the nature of the unknown Power in relation to ourselves. Perhaps the following would express the author's meaning: Theology is necessary; it is only an inadequate, although the best attainable, expression of a man's conception of the infinite Reality. So far as it goes, it may be true enough, but it falls deplorably short of knowledge. We may make the best theological system possible, still we are unprofitable servants—we fall so far short of the Reality that our theology is not true

⁹LOTZE, *Microcosmus*, Vol. II, p. 688.

¹⁰*History of Philosophy*, secs. 259, 260.

knowledge. However, a theology we must have; therefore, let us make it the best possible, although we have little or no claim for it as the true interpretation of "the unknown Power that sustains the universe." Theology is not then really useless; it is rather a beneficial intellectual exercise by means of which the heart's faith gets an expression and takes form, which in turn strengthens and maintains the faith. May not the place and function of theology be compared to that of poetry, whose imagery and grace inspire with lofty purposes, which express the soul as theology expresses the faith of religion? Every system of theology is representative of the period in which it is created, and prepares the faith which it expresses to become strong enough to seek at a later time another theological expression rendered necessary by the growth in the life of faith and by the social and intellectual changes that have taken place.

Mr. Hodgson is also apparently anxious to do what he can to bridge the chasm which he conceives to exist between the theoretical and the practical, between speculative knowledge and theology, as is evident from the following:

It is active and habitual obedience to conscience which inspires, and is impossible without inspiring, the confidence, that the power which we exert in so acting is identical in kind, and *continuous in fact*, with the inmost nature of the infinite and eternal Power which sustains the universe. It is true that we cannot think of this confidence without throwing the fact of it into conceptual form, and so forming a conception of the Power towards whom the confidence is felt. . . . The only knowledge on which it rests is a knowledge of our own confidence in the Eternal Power, which, in feeling that confidence, we feel as identical and continuous with ourselves. Expressed in conceptual form, the Eternal Power is a Person; but this conception is the creation of faith. (IV, 216, 217.)

The attributes of self-conscious knowledge, Purity, Justice, Mercy, Love, which the moral and religious consciousness ascribe to the eternal Power are, in the human shape in which alone we positively know them, but feeble adumbrations of what they are in Him, *i. e.*, in their true, but to us unimaginable, perfection (II, 227), although we have good grounds for inferring from practical reasoning the existence of such a universal, omniscient, moral consciousness (IV, 386).

The *vis medicatrix naturae* which physicians speak of, and the power sustaining conscience, which redeems from iniquity by means of penitence and reformation of life, are different operations of one and the same conditioning agency. (IV, 369.)

If this practical view of infinite Reality

be an illusion, it is at all events a necessary and uncontradicted one, and, moreover, one the genesis of which can be traced ultimately to the operation of the

very object whose nature it enables us to conceive, and the existence of which as a reality is speculatively and independently ascertained. (IV, 337.) The religious Faith of man, founded in his nature as a moral being, transcends the knowledge which his speculative intellect can procure, and anchors on the Eternal Reality beyond it. That this Faith is positively and speculatively legitimate and secure is among the truths which it is the humble but welcome duty of Philosophy to ascertain and establish. (IV, 434.)

It is very difficult to interpret Mr. Hodgson's conception of the exact worth of the practical and of its theological expression, but I think he intends to do what he can to mediate between the speculative and practical reason. The speculative reason, dealing with actual facts or existents leads us to the conception of the unknown Power; the practical fills this conception with content, the chief factor of which is self-conscious, moral Personality—a conception which cannot be received by the speculative reason as knowledge, but a conception which the speculative reason cannot show to involve a contradiction; it may, therefore, be cherished by the practical reason as the best attainable expression of the infinite Reality, although wholly inadequate. Theology, which formulates the contents of the practical is still within the practical, having indeed a measure of our confidence as representative of our relations to "the unknown Power that sustains the universe," but still cannot claim to be real knowledge of that Power. It may all be an illusion (IV, 337.)

We must grant that there are both advantages and truth in these conceptions of the place and function of theology. Among the advantages may be mentioned the fact that the theologian is freed from the troublesome speculative problems which arise when the constructed theology is assumed to be the truth concerning the existence and nature of God, man, and their relations. A teleology is "an empty dream;" a theodicy, "an insane imagination" (IV, 223, 424). Being thus freed, the theologian may construct his individual system, confident that he is giving expression to the content of his faith, which is in some vague way "*continuous in fact* with the Power which sustains the universe." Another constructing a different system, may have the same confidence, and each man's system is as good as the other, for each is to be "traced ultimately to the operation of the very object whose nature it enables us to conceive, and the existence of which is speculatively and independently ascertained." Into what a heritage of liberty theology thus enters! Calvinism and Ritschlianism stand side by side; both are in the practical sphere, are equally trustworthy, and may be equally illusive. Neither has a better claim than the other to be the absolute truth concerning the existence and nature of this unknown

Power in relation to ourselves. They serve their day and generation in expressing the content of moral and religious faith, as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* give expression in poetic form to another phase of man's life.

Such is my understanding of Mr. Hodgson's conception of the place and function of theology. Surely it has large advantage and much truth on its side; for theology certainly does have the office assigned it, and this office is not insignificant. The question is whether this is all the truth about theology. It is of supreme importance that the theologian decide what he is attempting in theology—a question which not all squarely face! Is he attempting to construct by a critical analysis of all data, both natural and revealed, a view of God and man and their relations which may be accepted as the truth—as corresponding with Reality; or is he simply endeavoring to give intellectual expression to the emotions and volitions which constitute his practical life, with no assurance that his construction is vital truth, at the most with only a vague confidence in it as the best intellectual expression of his faith of which he is capable? If I mistake not, the theologian is very prone to believe in his theology as the truth, although he may not have settled in his own mind just what his theology, if the truth, would involve; and, if our friend the theologian is right, Mr. Hodgson is wrong, although not entirely wrong, for the function assigned theology it undoubtedly has; he is wrong in the sense of too narrowly restricting the aim and scope of theology. For my part, I sympathize with that theologian who regards his theology as the ultimate truth. I must not, however, too hastily put aside Mr. Hodgson's view, which is similar to that of certain lines of theological thought today. Paulsen, for example, says that, in contrast with the former theological view which regarded dogma as the expression of theoretical truths which

can and must be scientifically demonstrated by means of exegetical and historical proofs or ontological and cosmological arguments or, which can and must be interpreted by abstruse speculation,

there is a new movement in Protestant theology for which

the dogma has the significance of a formula that does not bind the understanding as much as the will. It does not contain demonstrable predications of historical and natural reality, but articles of faith in values that are universally recognized, that satisfy the heart and determine the will.¹¹

The Ritschlian or neo-Kantian theology would do likewise. This conception of theology harmonizes fairly well with Mr. Hodgson's statement

¹¹PAULSEN, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 13.

that theology should be speculatively incontrovertible and "an intellectual embodiment of the practical Faith." Mr. Hodgson even goes beyond this neo-Kantian school in maintaining that the only basis of theology is philosophical, and that this basis must be such that no valid speculative objection can be made against it; with which I agree. I believe, however, that we must go farther; that, avoiding by ignoring the confusion that arises when we try to mark off the field of philosophy from that of theology and to distinguish or identify biblical theology, dogmatics, apologetics, systematic theology, and philosophy of religion as pleases our individual whim, the *aim* is to find the best possible expression of what we shall then believe in as the truth, after a careful analysis of subjective, historical, and speculative sources, concerning the existence and nature of God, man, and their relations. In this attempt I would make room for the fullest analysis of the individual experience, believing that these innermost experiences of heart and mind are as much a source of data for the synthetic view of the true Reality as the data of sense-perception. Lest the individual thinker, from the standpoint of his own experience solely, fall into mysticism and vagary, I would have him be kept sane by interpreting the social or race-experience in that unique expression of it found in the Scriptures, which will afford a wholesome correction and enlightenment to his own mind. I would have the individual experience, thus modified and enriched, founded upon and adjusted to a defensible speculative basis, forming with it a consistent whole of truth which shall be to this theologian the best and most reason-satisfying expression of his knowledge concerning God, man and their relations; indeed, concerning his own life and destiny.¹² It is the conviction that we have knowledge that alone can save theology from being a colorless expression of mere sentiment. Have we not had enough of this sickly theology which has no grip on Reality and claims none; whose highest aim is "not to bind the understanding," but to persuade the will? Let us recall those grand words of Erdmann, that the special problem of modern thought is "to start from self and find one's way back to a world and to God." This is no uncertain tone; recall his other words, which can, I think, be applied to theology as well as to philosophy: "Any system which left one of these sides [world or God] out of account, or which did not admit that there was a point where the two coincided, would cease to be philosophical;" and, I am confident, would cease to be a theology worthy of the name.

Again, shall we allow this separation of the theoretical and practical reason to pass unchallenged? Speculative thought in Fichte, Schelling,

¹²Cf. HARRIS, *The Self-Revelation of God*, chap. vii.

and Hegel did not; and, if I mistake not, this refusal to maintain the separation was nearer Kant's own meaning than some of the more recent speculations. What, I would ask, is the use of a philosophical basis of theology, which, according to Mr. Hodgson, theology must have, unless its truth forms some sort of positive foundation for the superstructure to keep theology from being just what he says it is, namely, a structure with little or no ultimate significance? Basis and superstructure must form a whole and give meaning and completeness to each other. A criticism from the standpoint of another basis would not be valid against a given theology, unless this other speculative basis could be shown to be the only defensible one.

Again, having undertaken the analysis and synthesis of the facts of conscious experience, the worth of the result depends upon the integrity and completeness of the facts. Why, then, shall we, according to Mr. Hodgson, separate one portion of the results of analysis and synthesis of the facts of conscious experience from another, and call one speculative knowledge, and the other merely the formulation of the content of the practical, and not knowledge? Moreover, on what ground does he choose one portion as significant of ultimate Reality and the other not? Both are subjective—for knowledge is subjective—and there is as much difficulty in getting from the subjective to the objective in the case of the speculative as in that of the practical. Indeed, we may go farther, and with Bosanquet, say that the objective reality is itself a construction of the individual whose correspondence with Reality rests upon an assumption.¹³ I maintain, therefore, that this separation between the theoretical and the practical, Kant and Mr. Hodgson notwithstanding, is inconsistent with the attempted analysis of the conscious experience which is a whole, and the result ought also to be a unity, or the cause for splitting the unity of conscious experience forthcoming. Whether we have a theology which both expresses our practical experience, including the significance of moral and religious faith, with a place for the sacred records of that experience on the part of a highly moral and religious people, and which also forms with a defensible philosophical basis a systematic view of God, man, and their relations, is not the question; the question is as to the status of theology, both as to its relation to its speculative basis and as to its trustworthiness as knowledge.

Again, we have also to ask what test is to be applied to the analysis and synthesis of the facts of conscious experience which shall determine whether our results are to be accepted as true or not? This test is, in

¹³BOSANQUET, *Essentials of Logic*, chaps. i, ii.

brief, that the systematic view formed by the synthesis must be free from contradiction and satisfy the reasoner by its tendency to harmonize the totality of his experience. This is little more than a statement of the governing principles of all reasoning, namely, the principles of identity or non-contradiction and sufficient reason. Setting out to analyze conscious experience as a whole, the synthesis of the factors of this conscious experience will itself be a whole, each part as trustworthy as another, although one be called speculative philosophy and the other practical theology.

Finally, as to a choice between Mr. Hodgson's conception of "the foundation of theology" and of theology itself, and any other conception of the same, the question is: Which is the more reason-satisfying? Which harmonizes better with our experience of life, world, and God? Note that it is a choice, not a compulsion. On the one hand, Mr. Hodgson has the advantage which comes from mere negation. He who does not commit himself to anything has nothing to defend. Mere negation concerning the Absolute is always safe and unassailable. On the other hand, the theologian who is confident that the speculative basis of his theology in unity with his theology are the truth about God, man, and their relations is easily thrown into a fright by a skeptical reference to his audacity in maintaining that he really knows the little he claims about God, his nature and purposes. Indeed, we must grant that the negative position is more becomingly humble. Still, there remains the never fully satisfied desire to know more of the all-wise God and Father whom to know is life eternal, and we simply cannot accept the doctrine that what we believe with all our hearts to be knowledge is not really the truth.